

Exchange Examined

When the U.S. began shipping out culture on an official level eight years ago, the purpose, apparently, was to show the world that American musicians, dancers, actors, and athletes were as gifted as their touring Russian counterparts. The keynote seemed to be competition. Now, according to a survey and report released by the State Department last week, the Cultural Presentations program "is neither designed nor suited to carry on cultural competition with the Sino-Soviet bloc, nor any other country or bloc."

A more "realistic appraisal" of purpose, the 30-page document continues, "is to reflect abroad the state of the performing arts in America, both in terms of creative cultural vitality and of the desire and capacity of a free people to support the development of a flourishing national culture."

The report grew out of an investigation started three months ago at the request of Lucius D. Battle, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Battle's action was prompted by sharp criticism, especially in Congress, of both the purpose and the administration of the Cultural Presentations program. Battle suspended the program, except for those attractions already committed to overseas contracts, pending the results of the inquiry conducted by Roy E. Larsen, chairman of the executive committee of Time Inc., and Glenn C. Wolfe, a Foreign Service officer familiar with administrative problems in government.

Guidance: After praising culture as a force in international goodwill, the report made specific recommendations for improving the program itself. The most significant was that the State Department should take over the managerial functions previously assigned to the American National Theatre and Academy, ANTA, which has been paid \$110,000 a year as the program's administrator, was "commended" for its past services, but a change was recommended "because of the need to eliminate duplication, to clarify responsibilities, and to provide direct policy guidance."

The report suggested that proper policy guidance might be best obtained through revitalizing the now-inactive Advisory Committee on the Arts with new membership, and retaining the panels of experts set up by ANTA to screen talent for overseas. It also pointed out that "what seems to be vitally needed is full knowledge of the nature, purpose, and character of the Cultural Presentations program among Americans—knowledge that, properly presented, could result in an 'it's me' with a strong appeal to American pride."

CPYRGHT